

bandage comprising a nonwoven fibrous web. However, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of the present invention are patentably distinguishable from Zook.

Zook describes a medicating device "which is able to occlusively cover and hydrate the target lesions allowing for better diffusion of the medication" (Col. 2, lines 17-19). The invention includes a viscoelastic gel pad, an occlusive covering sheet, and an elastic retaining ring (Col. 2, lines 63-65). Also, an affixing means to secure these components to the digit of the wearer is disclosed (Col. 2, line 63-65). The preferred affixing means is "an impermeable elastic tubular digit encasing sheath to which the retaining ring is affixed" (Col. 5, lines 35-37). The sheath is described as a "a form similar to a finger cut from a latex surgeon's glove" (Col. 5, lines 43-44). Additionally, "[t]he preferred sheath 48 is transparent, such transparency not only allowing observation of the medicated viscoelastic gel pad 14 during and after application, but also allows observation of the circulation status of the treated digit 12" (Col. 5, lines 47-51).

The present invention teaches a device for treating appendage ailments comprising a base web defining a sleeve. The base web includes a nonwoven web of fibrous material. Although Zook teaches a digit encasing sheath, the reference does not disclose a sheath comprising a nonwoven web of fibrous material. In fact, since Zook states that the encasing sheath is preferably transparent, it is believed that Zook teaches away from the use of a nonwoven web. All of the claims of the present invention call for a base web comprising a nonwoven web of fibrous material. As such, it is believed that the present invention is patentably distinguishable from Zook.

In the Office Action, dependent claims 7-8, 18, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zook in view of Abuto, et al. (U. S.

Patent No. 5,804,021) and Tanihara, et al. (U. S. Patent No. 5,770229). However, since these claims further limit and define the invention of claim 1, it is believed that the claims also patentably define over the cited references.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as written are patentably distinct over the prior art of record. As such, it is believed that the claims are in complete condition for allowance and favorable action is therefore requested. Examiner Hamilton, however, is encouraged and invited to telephone the undersigned at her convenience should any issues remain after consideration of this amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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